

**NORTH CAROLINA SUSTAINABLE LOCAL FOOD
ADVISORY COUNCIL MINUTES
APRIL 28, 2011**

The sixth meeting of the Sustainable Local Food Advisory Council (Council) was held April 28, 2011, at the Martin Building on the NC State Fairgrounds in Raleigh, NC. Council Chair, Commissioner Steve Troxler, opened the meeting at 1:06 pm.

MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE

Dr. Alice Ammerman
Mr. Uli Bennewitz
Dr. Nancy Creamer
Mr. John Day
Mr. Billy Ray Hall
Ms. Debbie Hamrick
Dr. Lynn Harvey
Ms. Savonala Horne

Mr. Phil Hudson
Mr. Charlie Jackson
Dr. Ed Jones
Rev. Mac Legerton
Mr. Roland McReynolds
Ms. Earline Middleton
Mr. Randall Patterson
Commissioner Steve Troxler

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE

Mr. Tim Gravely was in attendance for Secretary Keith Crisco
Ms. Diane Beth was in attendance for Dr. Jeffrey Engel

ABSENT MEMBERS

Mr. Jamie Ager
Mr. Ted Burch
Secretary Keith Crisco
Dr. Jeffrey Engel
Ms. Linda Harris

Mr. Barry Nash
Mr. Willy Phillips
Mr. Tommy Porter, Jr.
Ms. LaTisha Watford

OPENING COMMENTS

Commissioner Troxler welcomed the Council as well as those in attendance. He then introduced new Council member, Jane Iseley; Ms. Iseley owns and operates Iseley Farms in Burlington, NC, as well as the Vegetable Barn, an NCDA&CS certified roadside market. Additionally, Dr. Joe Zublena, Assistant Vice Chancellor of Extension and Engagement and Associate Dean and Director, will be named as the Cooperative Extension representative and will be appointed by Governor Perdue. Dr. Zublena will be replacing Dr. Jon Ort in this position on the Council.

Commissioner Troxler then acknowledged the tornadoes that impacted North Carolina and the southeast region during recent weeks. Video footage was then shared from Commissioner Troxler's recent visit to the areas of North Carolina impacted by the April 16 weather events including Lee, Bertie and Johnston counties. Commissioner Troxler emphasized that neighbor to neighbor help will be needed in the impacted areas. In terms of governmental assistance, agriculture infrastructure needs often fall through the cracks. USDA Farm Service Agency

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currently has \$1.5 million in their debris removal program. Crop damage from this event was minimal considering the areas affected. Anticipate FEMA will be able to provide assistance in debris removal and restoration as well. Debbie Hamrick thanked Commissioner Troxler for establishing the Ag Tornado Assistance Program (AgTAP) hotline to address questions in the agricultural community following the disaster. Billy Ray Hall thanked Commissioner Troxler for visiting these rural areas. Mr. Hall stated that the rural community is looking to the Commissioner for leadership, especially during this time.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF JANUARY 20, 2011 AND MARCH 15, 2011 COUNCIL MEETING

Mr. Randall Patterson made a motion to approve the minutes of the January 20, 2011, and March 15, 2011, meetings as presented. The motion was seconded by Mr. John Day. The minutes were unanimously approved.

REVIEW AND DISCUSSION OF MISSION AND SCOPE

Ms. Joy Hicks, NC Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, led the Council in a discussion regarding the mission and scope of the NC Sustainable Local Food Advisory Council.

Discussion around this presentation was as follows:

Mr. Ray Starling, NCDA&CS General Counsel, shared the statutory difference between an advisory council and a body with rule making authority. Commissioner Troxler stated the NCSLFAC has the specific duty to be a sounding board; rule making bodies have public hearings, review specific rules and report back to the General Assembly.

Mr. John Day asked what the framework is to guide the Council and the Council needs to keep in mind who thoughts and recommendations from the group are being addressed to. He also shared that there are no financial resources available to the Council outside of the grant from the Golden LEAF Foundation. Dr. Nancy Creamer shared that you can seek resources through partnering organizations to get funding to do programmatic activities related to sustainable local foods.

Mr. Roland McReynolds expressed that he would like to see four items captured in writing that show the Councils impact on the local foods community. Ms. Hicks shared that the guidelines established by the Council are self imposed and are not part of the statute forming the Council.

Ms. Debbie Hamrick shared that the process for resolutions was brought to question during a recent Economic Development and Infrastructure Committee meeting. Mr. McReynolds shared that developing proposals and recommendations are part of what the Council is to do; and that he supports a process for resolutions to get buy-in from both Council members and constituent groups. Mr. Charlie Jackson expressed that he was uncomfortable with the short turnaround time for resolutions. Mr. Uli Bennewitz expressed similar concern; it's easy to put forward motions but it really is a role of the Council to look strategically at resolution items. Commissioner Troxler shared that the consensus of the Executive Council was to strengthen subcommittees and to look at long-term policy and goals of the Council while still being reactive as needed to strengthen local foods. Mr. Jackson reiterated that he didn't feel the Council had enough time to

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make recommendations for resolutions and was not sure what the procedure is for establishing Council policies to address. Dr. Creamer shared that she felt part of the angst is that the Council has not been proactive to the point they have to be reactive to resolutions; she also shared that at the next meeting, the Council will be looking at strategic recommendations from the subcommittees. Commissioner Troxler responded by saying the reactive resolutions are by choice; if the Council doesn't want to draft and pass resolutions at meetings, they don't have to. Dr. Creamer stated that this helps the Council maintain flexibility to address legislation that may hurt local foods. Mr. Day stated that it is hard to change wording after legislation is passed. The Council needs to be active while decision is occurring; if not, it may take a long time for the issues to be revisited. Commissioner Troxler stated that NC is a changing state. Redistricting will have an impact on agriculture and agribusiness. An increasing number of North Carolinians don't know about agriculture. Ms. Hamrick stated that the Guidelines for Resolutions were not brought up for the Council to adopt, but to make members more aware of the process. Commissioner Troxler said the Council would be able to follow guidelines to the best of its ability, but will have to be aware the flexibility is also needed to make the Council work effectively. Mr. Patterson shared that all of his concerns regarding resolutions were addressed by what was outlined in the guidelines.

Mr. Randall Patterson made a motion to accept the recommendations as guiding principles; Mr. Roland McReynolds seconded the motion and the motion carried.

PROGRESS TO DATE

Mr. Jim Cummings shared with the Council a presentation on accomplishments of the Council.

Discussion around this presentation was as follows:

Commissioner Troxler highlighted that recommendations and resolutions presented by the Council are taken seriously by decision makers. One example of this was transferring meat and poultry inspection over to federal regulators. As a result of actions by many, including focusing on how the Meat and Poultry Division help enhance local meats, the division will stay as part of NCDA&CS. Another example is that the Farmland Preservation Trust Fund has proposed funding of \$1.7 million for next year.

Mr. McReynolds also mentioned the importance of a presentation by Mr. Don Delozier regarding regulations for on-farm poultry processing and how it helped clarify how NCDA&CS helps in this area.

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SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS AND DISCUSSION

Economic Development and Infrastructure

Ms. Debbie Hamrick, Chair of the Economic Development and Infrastructure Committee, shared that there is a regulatory minefield at the local, state and federal. She also shared that the committee has had several in-depth discussions regarding infrastructure and what needs to be in place first, the farm or the market infrastructure. Mr. Patterson shared that from his experience, the two go hand in hand. Commissioner Troxler pointed out the Pilot Mountain Pride project in Surry County. In the first year, the group had \$1.5 million in sales. This project has enabled smaller producers to get their product into the marketplace. Additionally, all farms associated with the project are GAP certified.

Mr. Bennewitz commented on the importance to be careful not to distort the market. Ms. Jane Iseley commented that the marketing infrastructure helps, but works hand in hand with production.

Ms. Hamrick asked what action items would look like in regards to infrastructure. Ms. Savi Horne responded that there needs to be a small infrastructure in place to finish product, driven by market for the product. A balance of public and private funders would be needed to make it successful. Mr. Bennewitz commented on current activity in regards to several processing facilities, making NC a bright spot nationally in the local foods movement. He also stated the need to focus on delivery systems because demand for local foods is here.

Dr. Creamer commented on the scale of processing. One facility might be able to handle volume without having additional processing centers. Need to look at scale needed to serve local farms with a location that would be convenient. Commissioner Troxler commented that it would be a benefit to a wide array of processors if public funds were available. This would help develop partnerships to build markets similar to success found in Cabarrus County. Dr. Creamer then stated that regulatory issues may need to be revisited and revised to address current situation. She also stated there is a need to have a place to find information on all regulations and what you need to think about prior to starting a local foods business. Mr. Tim Gravely reported that the Department of Commerce is a partner with Business Link NC, which can help new businesses with regulatory and licensing concerns. Mr. Cummings also shared that the Department of Environment and Natural Resources has a regulation center to help address questions. Ms. Iseley commented that these regulations scare people off and can seem overwhelming. Ms. Earline Middleton stated she thought it was a good idea to have concise information available in one location. Mr. Patterson asked what would have to happen if he wanted to start doing strawberry jam production on farm; what agencies would he have to work with? Mr. Jim Melvin said he'd have to complete a brief survey which would be reviewed to help determine. Ms. Diane Beth commented that listening sessions would be a great idea to see what the needs are on a local level.

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Health, Wellness, Hunger and Food Access

Dr. Alice Ammerman, Chair of the Health, Wellness, Hunger and Food Access Subcommittee, presented an update from the subcommittee.

Food safety is an issue that the subcommittee continues to face. A resolution is proposed from the subcommittee to form an interagency collaboration to address food safety issues for school gardens. Ms. Beth also informed the Council that some local child care/preschool programs are creating gardens and there seems to be inconsistent information whether or not these gardens would need to be GAP certified (so the children could eat foods from it), so it may be helpful to think about preschools as a secondary focus.

In regards to Farm to School, the subcommittee would like to see more farmers participate. Additional pilots would be helpful to have more facilities handle fresh foods. Commissioner Troxler shared that he is meeting with Mr. Billy Ray Hall to discuss expanding the NCDA&CS Farm to School program in rural areas. Mr. Jackson asked how more farmers could participate in the Farm to School program. Challenges identified included lack of infrastructure to store and prepare fresh foods, the need to purchase smaller amounts, and competition with independent distributors going into smaller schools. Commissioner Troxler also reminded the Council that school is not in session during most harvest times. A question about local meats in schools was raised. Dr. Lynn Harvey shared that it would have to be further processed to be used in a school environment; Commissioner Troxler stated that it couldn't be transported with fresh fruits and vegetables because of risk of cross contamination.

After additional dialogue, Dr. Creamer moved to accept, and Ms. Beth seconded the following support statement with Council approval:

The North Carolina Sustainable Local Food Advisory Council supports the exploration of an interagency (DDA, NCDA&CS, DPH, NCSU, NCATSU/NCCES, UNC-CH and any stakeholders who may have an interest) collaboration to create and disseminate guidelines, resources and educational materials for school stakeholders (administration, child nutrition, parent/community groups, etc.) regarding the safe production, harvest and use of school garden foods in schools.

Land, People, and Natural Resources

The Subcommittee Chair, Mr. John Day, presented updates from the committee. Mr. Day thanked the Council for taking a position on several issues that are being addressed this legislative session. Commissioner Troxler mentioned that several bills have been generated from these suggestions. There is also proposed legislation regarding extraterritorial jurisdiction (ETJ) that has support from the NCDA&CS, Farm Bureau, and Grange. Mr. Hall asked about plan for Century Farms. Currently there are 1,600 farms statewide with this designation.

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Ms. Beth shared that the Centers for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC) has Sustainable Food Service Guidelines including food procurement in state agencies as a component.

Ms. Hicks asked that the subcommittees begin working on action plans based on recommendations. Subcommittees will begin filling out templates prior to the July meeting to help provide framework for the annual report. The focus of these templates should be to formulate subcommittee goals into action items. Ms. Hamrick responded that it was a short turn-around time and will take willingness and effort to do.

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

Ms. Joy Hicks provided a legislative update on items of interest to the Council.

- House Bill 162 – An Act to Exempt Certain Activities Related to Small-Scale Processing of Agricultural Products from Wastewater Permit Requirements has been signed into law.
- House Bill 168 – An Act Providing a Zoning Exemption for Any Agricultural Interest Annexed by a Municipality and Exempting Coverage of any Agricultural Interest in the Extraterritorial Planning Jurisdiction of a Municipality has been referred to the Senate
- Agricultural Research Stations: In the House budget, 4 Stations are under a continuation review (Oxford, Butner, Border Belt, Caswell), 30 positions would be eliminated and no funding in year two of the budget.
- Farmland Preservation is identified in Senate Bill 109 – An Act to Require the Governor to Cut Spending for the Current Fiscal Year, as returning \$2.5 million to the state budget; \$1.8 million of this is unobligated, may have to dip into reserves to cover these funds. Under the same bill, Golden LEAF is identified as having a \$67 million payment intercepted and the Tobacco Trust Fund and Health and Wellness Trust Funds are dissolved completely. Commissioner Troxler pointed out the intercession with Golden LEAF Foundations funding means that no funds would be added for two years; Tobacco Trust Fund and the Health and Wellness Trust Fund would be eliminated completely in the House budget. Commissioner Troxler reported that the bill currently has the Board of Agriculture performing the role of the Tobacco Trust Fund. The three current Tobacco Trust Fund employees would be transferred to the Department to perform their same function.

OTHER

Dr. Creamer reported that the CEFS 10% Campaign has had 273 businesses sign up to date. There is a website that lists partners in the program.

Mr. Bennewitz reported on the Carolina Meat Conference, organized by Jennifer Curtis. There is lots of excitement around local meats industry. One area of concern is meat processors; labor is an issue the industry is facing as it grows. An education and training system are needed to grow the industry. There is an increased emphasis in craft training, and North Carolina is a leader in this area. Growing the local meats industry will result in quality, high paying rural

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employment opportunities. The NCSLFAC provided \$500 contribution to support this inaugural conference.

Dr. Creamer asked if there should be a statement from the Council regarding the use of trust funds. Ms. Savi Horne responded that it would be most helpful and appropriate. After a lengthy discussion, the following Resolution was made by Mr. Phil Hudson and seconded by Ms. Iseley and approved by the Council:

The North Carolina Sustainable Local Food Advisory Council recommends that Agriculture and related entities not be cut disproportionately in this budget process.

Ms. Debbie Hamrick made a motion to close the meeting, which was seconded by Mr. Roland McReynolds and passed unanimously. The Council meeting adjourned at 4:26 pm.

Prepared by:
Elizabeth P. Farrell
Administrative Assistant, NCDA&CS

Adopted by the Council this
21st day of July 2011



Commissioner Steven W. Troxler, Chair
Sustainable Local Food Advisory Council



Dr. Nancy Creamer, Vice Chair
Sustainable Local Food Advisory Council